

## **MEETING NOTES**

### **1. INTRODUCTIONS**

Matt Rogers with Century West led off the discussion and asked everyone attending to introduce themselves. The original target for the second meeting in the planning process was for early June. The meeting was delayed based on research into hangar tenant agreements and through the fence agreements on the airfield. The research took much longer than anticipated and delayed progress on the Inventory chapter. David Miller worked with the Aviation Division and WSDOT real estate staff to determine property boundaries and determine ownership for off airport and on airport property. With the property information solidified we were able to complete the inventory chapter as it relates to existing facilities and review activity at the airfield.

### **2. OVERVIEW OF INVENTORY & FORECAST CHAPTER**

David Miller provided a summary of aviation activity referring to the following section of the draft chapter starting on page 2-29:

#### **Existing Aircraft Operations – Summary**

The FAA provides planning guidance for general aviation airports without control towers when estimating aircraft activity. The FAA uses a ratio of the average number of operations per based aircraft to account for both locally based and transient general aviation aircraft activity. The recommended ratios include 250 operations per based aircraft for small airports with low activity; 350 for airports with moderate local and itinerant activity; and 450 for high activity urban or regional airports.

It appears that the general aviation itinerant activity at Methow State Airport - in relation to its based aircraft total – is higher than typically found at airports in smaller rural communities. The airport accommodates aircraft for intermittent and extended periods that are based at other airports. Some of the newer hangars constructed off airport property are occupied on a part-time basis with these aircraft. The Valley's ability to attract visitors and support a mobile local resident population are unique factors affecting airport activity. To reflect the trend, a slightly higher activity ratio (300 operations per based aircraft) will be used to estimate the current level of general aviation activity.

Based on the conditions noted above, the following method was used to estimate aircraft operations (using 2008 base year data) at Methow Valley State Airport in this forecasting application:

- A. USFS North Cascades Smokejumper Base = 1,000 annual operations. Forest Service and private contractors operating fixed-wing aircraft and helicopter. These operations are estimated to be 100 percent itinerant. This level of activity is assumed to be constant for the planning period based on historic and planned activity patterns.
- B. Medevac activity = 20 annual operations. Northwest MedStar and Airlift Northwest fixed-wing operations. 100 percent itinerant. This activity has the potential to increase in the future with the addition of an instrument approach to aid night and poor weather operations for fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters.
- C. Military activity = 25 annual operations. Occasional helicopter activity. This level of activity is assumed to be constant for the planning period.
- D. Locally based and transient general aviation activity = a ratio of 300 operations per (9) based aircraft, for a total of 2,700 annual operations. This level of activity is expected to increase in line with an increase in based aircraft during the planning period.
- E. All activity segments combine for a 2008 base year total of 3,700 operations.

Based on the approach outlined above, the 2008 estimate of aviation activity for Methow Valley State Airport is 9 based aircraft and 3,700 annual operations.

David Miller provided a description of the Design Aircraft referring to the section starting on page 2-30 in the draft chapter:

#### Design Aircraft

Based on FAA criteria, the design aircraft, or family of aircraft, must have a minimum of 500 annual itinerant operations. The 1995 Airport Layout Plan and the 2007 WSDOT LATS forecast identifies the deHavilland Twin Otter (DHC-6) as the “existing” design aircraft. The Twin Otter is included in Aircraft Approach Category A and Airplane Design Group II (ADG II), which results in Airport Reference Code (ARC) A-II. The future design aircraft was previously identified as a Beechcraft King Air 200, a business class turboprop. The King Air was identified as the future design aircraft on the 1995 ALP and in the 2007 WSDOT LATS forecasts (beginning in 2020).

The combination of ADG II smokejumper aircraft and other itinerant ADG II aircraft (Approach Category A through D) appear to meet the FAA minimum of 500 annual operations required for the design aircraft or family of design aircraft. Based on current traffic levels, Approach Category A and Airplane Design Group II appear to be the appropriate criteria for defining the current/future ARC as A-II. The CASA 212 is representative of the A-II type of aircraft used in smokejumper operations.

The other ADG II aircraft activity (Approach Categories B, C and D) is not expected to reach the required 500 annual operation threshold during the current planning period.

Based on these considerations, and the forecast activity described later in the chapter, the recommended current and future ARC for Runway 13/31 is A-II.

### **3. DISCUSSION OF KEY ISSUES – CONFORMANCE TO STANDARDS AND FACILITY REQUIREMENTS – KEY ISSUES**

The dimensional standards for the layout of airport facilities is determined by the design aircraft. As mentioned the design aircraft for the Methow Valley State Airport is an ADG II aircraft, so ADG II design standards apply. We applied the ADG II standards to the existing facilities at the airport to assess the conformance to standards. In Figures 3-1 and 3-2 we summarize pictorially the nonstandard conditions that exist on the airfield.

On the 31 end you will notice there are a number of issues. One of the main issues is Evans Road is too close to the runway end and runs through the runway safety area. The concrete barrier blocks that line the road are also an issue. Both the roadway and the blocks are in the runway safety area and the obstacle free zone or OFZ. There are also trees and the irrigation ditch that are nonstandard obstructions on the 31 end.

On the 13 end there are significantly fewer issues. There is an irrigation ditch that runs through the runway safety area (RSA), some terrain penetrations, and the RSA is not on airport property. The FAA prefers to have the RSA (and RPZ if possible) controlled by the airport through property ownership.

In the infield area there are a number of issues identified on Figure 3-2. These include parked aircraft on the USFS apron, hangars located in the OFA and OFZ and primary and transitional surface penetrations.

The issues that have been identified will be considered in the development of preliminary alternatives for airport improvements. The alternatives will be developed to meet two goals, bringing the airport into compliance with FAA standards and meeting forecast demand over the 20 year planning period. The safety related improvements take precedent over demand driven improvements.

The issues identified will take many years to address and some may still remain at the end of the planning period. For instance, the hangars identified as obstructions would likely not need to be moved until a parallel taxiway project was underway. The relocation of the hangars would like be completed in conjunction with that project. Some of the more pressing issues, like the runway safety

area issues, will likely show up in projects in the near term because they are more pressing safety concerns.

Over the past few years the FAA has become more stringent on meeting standards and eliminating deficiencies at airport that they provide funding to. For the Aviation Division there is also a concern over risk and liability. When a pilot flies into an unknown field the fact that there are standards across the country allows the pilot to know what to expect. Also, this airport is a vital transportation asset for the Valley and by complying with FAA standards we minimize the risk for the people that use the airport.

Many of the pilots expressed the need for an instrument approach. Also, when Northwest MedStar was contacted, they indicated that an instrument approach at Methow would improve their capabilities. The Aviation Division has requested that they FAA Flight Procedures Office look into the feasibility of a GPS approach procedure.

The question came up if it would be possible to relocate the airport. Typically site studies for a new airport require a minimum of 300 acres of suitable flat land with clear approaches. The current airport is on 65 acres. Find a suitable substitute in the Methow Valley would be difficult.

#### **4. NEXT STEPS**

The next steps are to take the information developed to date and create preliminary alternatives. The conformance issues will be reviewed and we will develop alternatives that address the issues and meet FAA standards. For instance, the issue with Evans Road may require looking at closing the road at the south end of the runway and providing access from another location, may include shortening the runway, or shifting the runway to meet standards.

Between now and the next meeting the consultant team in coordination with the FAA and WSDOT Aviation Division will work to develop the preliminary alternatives for discussion at the next meeting.